

Corporate Seniority vs. Union Seniority

We often hear questions about seniority, especially around job postings, vacation selection, and advancement. The confusion usually comes from the fact that there are two types of seniority:

- **Corporate Seniority**
- **Union Seniority**

Your rights are set out in the CUPE 998 Collective Agreement, specifically Article 1 (Seniority / Employee Status) and Article C 1.6 (Union Seniority).

Corporate Seniority

Corporate seniority is how the employer tracks your total length of service. It's commonly used for things like benefits, service awards, and HR administration.

It does not automatically determine your rights under the Collective Agreement.

Union Seniority

Union seniority is your seniority within the CUPE bargaining unit. This is the seniority CUPE relies on when enforcing the Collective Agreement and protecting member rights, as defined in Article 1 and Article C 1.6.

Why it matters

Simply put:

- **Corporate seniority** = Years of service with the employer
- **Union seniority** = Years you have been in the CUPE jurisdiction

When a process is governed by the Collective Agreement, union seniority is usually the standard that should apply. This matters when senior members are bypassed, internal experience is overlooked, or decisions are applied inconsistently.

Bottom line

If you're told a decision is based on corporate seniority, it's fair to ask:

“Does the Collective Agreement require union seniority to be used here?”

When your rights are on the line, the Collective Agreement matters.